TOWN
&
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HURCH

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OF RELIGION

The Ashfield Churches

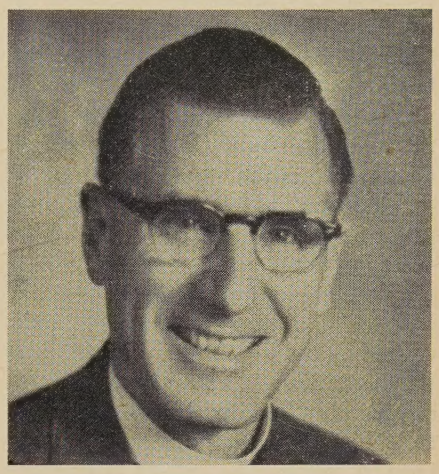
PHILIP HUMASON STEINMETZ
Pastor, 1945-57

• The First Congregational Church and St. John's Episcopal Church in Ashfield, Massachusetts, have been "married" for twelve years. As in every Christian marriage, neither husband nor wife is head of the household, for over both and recognized by both is the Lordship of Christ and moving in both is the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The initiative in establishing this relationship was taken in the spring of 1945 by the Rt. Rev. William Appleton Lawrence, Bishop of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Rev. Charles F. Whiston, Vicar of St. John's Church, who was just leaving to take his present post on the faculty of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. Since the pastor of the Congregational Church, the Rev. Walter G. Couch, Jr. had just resigned and since there was no other church in this little New England village of some 1,000 souls, it seemed an unusual opportunity to see what might come of a common pastorate for the two churches, each continuing as a separate congregation and yet living intimately together with the same pastor.

The man who has served as pastor during these twelve years is the Rev. Philip Humason Steinmetz, a priest of the Episcopal Church who was "recognized" by the Franklin Association of Congregational Christian Churches and Ministers as Pastor of the Ashfield Congregational Church on the basis of its call and his Orders in the Episcopal Church.

Many enterprises are carried out here together. There is a common Sunday school which knows by name every non-Roman Catholic child and is in touch with each one, though not all come to church every Sunday. There is a common program of Weekday Religious Education for high school students which enrolls



Philip Steinmetz

more than three-quarters of all the students in the high school and a United Youth Group meeting Sunday evenings. There is a freedom about sharing in worship in either church which is not tangled with the personality of the preacher. After all, you hear the same sermon no matter where you go. So you go to the church which is for you the better channel for expressing your worship of God either because of its hour or character.

At 8:00 A.M. every Sunday in St. John's Church there is a simple Celebration of Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer. Alternate Sundays there is Holy Communion and Sermon or Morning Prayer and Sermon at 9:45 A.M. At 11 A.M. there is a non-liturgical service and sermon in the Congregational Church with Holy Communion four times a year. During this later service the Sunday school classes meet using both buildings and teachers from both congregations. Special and occasional services are held in one church or the other according to practical considerations of size and suitability.

(*Continued on Page 2*)

(*Continued from Page* 1)

There is never any conflict for the pastor cannot be in two places at once! When a fifth Sunday in the month comes along all join in a Union Service alternately in and according to the ritual of the host church.

Imagine moving into this little community without having made up your mind about which church is "yours." The pastor calls. People of both churches rejoice that "their" pastor is on the job visiting those new people. But you have a tough decision to make. You cannot go to the church where you think the preaching is best, as you may have done in other places, for here it is the same. Neither can you get any help from following where your children go to Sunday school, for they are going to the Ashfield Sunday school operated by both churches. Nor yet can you choose the church with the more attractive pastor. You simply have to choose the church on the basis of its character as a church.

And do you know that neither church has gained over the other during these dozen years, but rather that both have grown stronger? Apparently the Holy Spirit works without paying close attention to the polity, creed and liturgy of the body he is using.

Of course this "marriage" has its stresses and strains. There are times when each church wonders whether it would not be better to be single again. Just this past year this thought was being given considerable expression among Congregationalists just before the Annual Meeting. Some thought that a divorce was about to take place. But when the free, secret, written ballots were counted, with more cast than ever in recent history, the score was more than seven to one in favor of continuing together, showing that those whom God has joined together men cannot pull asunder.

The children of this "marriage" are growing up together with a fuller understanding of each church than is the lot of most young people. Before they join either church they have a special series of meetings in which that which is distinctive of that church is clearly presented. But their basic training in the Christian Faith is given in a common Sunday school which demonstrates by its continued existence that we have one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all.

Similar "marriages" are taking place elsewhere: there are two others in Western Massachusetts. In Winchendon it is the Methodist Church which is sharing with Emmanuel Episcopal Church the ministry of a Lay Vicar, Mr. John S. Tyler, who is an Episcopalian. In Shelburne Falls, the Baptist and Congregational Churches have formed with Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church a Trinity Fellowship under one pastor, the Rev. Louis F. Kirlin, a Baptist minister who, having been confirmed, has been licensed as Lay Reader and appointed Lay Vicar of Emmanuel Church. And in Tamworth, N. H. another such arrangement has started under an Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. George W. Wickersham II.

It is often wondered whether such a situation can continue under new leadership, to which the answer is that it has in Shelburne Falls. And it will in Ashfield, as Mr. Steinmetz leaves to join the staff of the Massachusetts Council of Churches.

Prayer of the Christian Farmer

• O God, Source and Giver of all things, Who dost manifest Thy infinite majesty, power and goodness in the earth about us, we give Thee honor and glory.

For the sun and the rain, for the manifold fruits of our fields, for the increase of our herds and flocks, we thank Thee. For the enrichment of our souls with divine grace, we are grateful.

Supreme Lord of the harvest, graciously accept us and the fruits of our toil, in union with Christ, Thy Son, as atonement for our sins, for the growth of Thy Church, for peace and charity in our homes, for salvation to all. *Amen.*

—G. T. Bergan
Bishop of Des Moines, Iowa
(The Roman Catholic Church)

Love Me—Love My Dog

• It is easy to love persons you like, especially if they like you. But in loving them you get involved with those they love. And some of them are sure to rub you the wrong way.

This is the situation we face with our "in laws." And it is not always a happy one because we do not always measure up to its demands. It is also the situation we face when we love the Lord. For we soon find that He is loving a variety of people we detest. And thru Him we get thrown with them in Christian brotherhood and have to learn to love them, unless we are willing to give up loving Him.

Some people react to this situation by withdrawing from the fellowship. They stay away from church and refrain from taking part in parish life because they do not like the pastor or some of those who are active there. They love the Lord but not all of those He loves and is saving.

Others stay in contact but quarrel with those who irritate them and spend a good deal of time talking with others about how badly they are doing. "Wouldn't you think she would . . ." or "How could anyone be a Christian and. . . "? They do not realize that it is these very lost sheep who are especially close to the heart of God.

But sometimes He stirs us to start looking for what He loves in the other person, rather than at the obvious ugliness which first strikes us.

This past week a man said to some of us, "This woman you are about to meet is, I think, the homeliest woman I have ever met. But the longer you know her, the less you notice it, she is so utterly good." When we can say that about all those whom the Lord loves, we will have grown in grace to the stature of the fullness of Christ and we will know the joy of Christmas. Until then we count on God's love seeking and finding and saving us.

—Philip Humason Steinmetz

Students to Town and Country Churches

MARGARET TAMMEN

• Town and country churches were the first places of service after graduation for almost half (49.4 per cent) of the recent graduates of McCormick Theological Seminary whose first positions could be determined. Of the 562 graduates between 1950 and 1956, addresses at their first positions could be determined for 423; 49.4 per cent of these were in places of up to 10,000 population. This was revealed in a study made recently by Donald E. Bennett, a student at the seminary, on interest in the town and country church among present seminary students. Mr. Bennett's study showed that 44.3 per cent of the students who responded to a mail questionnaire indicated that they feel the church position they should take upon graduation would be in a community under 10,000 population; the questionnaire returns represented 62 per cent of the 1956-1957 student body of 283, a high percentage return for studies of this type. Of the 176, 39 specified a rural community as the location of the position they should take; another 39 specified "a community up to 10,000" in population.

While a slightly larger percentage of recent graduates have gone to town and country communities than the percentage of 1956-1957 students who plan to do so, it may be concluded that most of those who go do plan on it and thus have an active interest in the town and country church while in seminary, an interest which might be further developed through specialized training and activities.

Mr. Bennett's study grew out of discussion at a meeting of the Presbyterian Rural Fellowship student chapter at McCormick, founded in 1956, with 14 charter members (one honorary and 19 student members at the present time). Thus McCormick is providing the opportunity for students with the town and country church interest to develop their knowledge of such areas, at the same time building a fellowship of the concerned. The Executive Committee of the Fellowship at its annual meeting in 1956 took action commending the establishment of the McCormick chapter and encouraging the establishment of student chapters at other Presbyterian seminaries.

While the findings of Mr. Bennett's study have significance for the role of the Fellowship in the seminary, they are also of interest in relation to the proportion of Presbyterian U. S. A. churches located in communities under 10,000 to which the graduates are going. According to the *PRESBYTERIAN U. S. A. CHURCH DISTRIBUTION STUDY, PART I, 1940-1953,* made by the office for Field Survey of the Board of National Missions, 68.3 per cent of all our churches in 1953 were located in places under 10,000 population. With only 49.4 per cent of the graduates taking their first positions in such communities, the town and country churches are not getting their share of seminary graduates (insofar as McCormick graduates are typical of all seminary graduates in selecting the size of community in which to take their first positions).

The North Central area, from which many McCormick students come, and to which many more McCormick graduates go (according to Bennett's study), is *next to the least* highly urbanized of the four regions of the United States. Possibly more students are interested in and graduates go to town and country communities from McCormick than from most other seminaries of the denomination because there are in the North Central area proportionately more town and country communities there to which to go. (Only the South, with two Presbyterian U. S. A. seminaries, is less urbanized than the North Central area.) Because the North Central area is less urbanized, probably more than 68.3 per cent of the churches in the area are in places under 10,000, which means a wider gap between the per cent of churches in places under 10,000 and the per cent of McCormick graduates going to those places.

It should be kept in mind further that the locations of graduates are their *first* positions. Considering the well-known fact that many from town and country communities go on to churches in larger places after they have acquired experience, the town and country churches probably have fewer than 49.4 per cent of these recent McCormick graduates today.

What can be done to hold such people in town and country churches, and what can be done to initiate town and country interest among seminary students, are not the topics of this paper, though activity to develop an interest already felt may in addition initiate such interest in others. This latter activity is the present concern. The student chapter of the Presbyterian Rural Fellowship at a theological seminary is in a unique position. Through the programs of the chapter can come coordination of the seminary training (both general and specialized rural training) and field work experiences, with application to other town and country situations as described and discussed. It is hoped that other seminaries besides McCormick will encourage such activity for students who plan to or might be stimulated to serve in town and country churches.

Your Harvest Festival

• Have you overlooked ordering your *Order of Service for a Harvest Festival?* If you have, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $1.50 for each 100 copies.

How Shall Church Buildings Follow Function?

• "Form follows function." These words are ascribed to the well-known architect, Louis Sullivan, who probably formulated them after reading works of others. They point "to the basic problem of good architecture for the church," writes the Rev. Marvin Halverson in *Architectural Record,* New York, December, 1956, in a comprehensive article, "On Getting Good Architecture for the Church." Mr. Halverson is executive director, Department of Worship and Arts, Division of Christian Life and Work, National Council of Churches.

Religious bodies of all faiths in the United States are reported to have expended $775,000,000 for "religious buildings" in 1956, according to estimates of the U.S. Department of Commerce. In 1955, the amount was estimated to be $736,000,000. The per member expenditure for buildings in 1956 was about $7.70 per member which was over 900 per cent of the estimated amount spent per member in 1939. It was also nearly 400 per cent of the amount per member in 1929.

The type of building to be erected is thus not an academic question, Mr. Halverson writes. "We are faced with immediate concerns. . . ." But while Louis Sullivan was designing modern buildings, "the churches imitated the past." In the city where Sullivan worked, there are "vain monuments to middle-class ecclesiastical pride and reminders" that the churches "failed to understand the religious and social meaning of their buildings and their time." They did not create in a building "the living present anticipating the future."

"If this article were to have a text, it would be this: a church building which is effectively designed in terms of the function of the Church (and the particular congregation for which the building is erected) will have an appropriate form and thus the building may take on the nature of a symbol, saying to the world something of what the Church believes.

"But before this can be achieved, the church must have a clearer understanding of its function, its vocation in the world—in today's and tomorrow's world. . . ."

Reprints of the article are obtainable from the Department of Worship and the Arts, National Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Interested in Recreation?

• The clergy and lay leaders interested in recreation will find much material of value in the latest copy of AGBOR (A Guide to Books on Recreation), published by the National Recreation Association, which is now ready. This list of books (all conveniently available through the Association, a non-profit service organization) comprises what may be the most comprehensive collection of books on recreation available. This second edition of AGBOR today contains more than 850 titles from 125 publishers.

AGBOR has a section devoted exclusively to church recreation, including such books as "Christian Fellowship Games" and "Ventures in Christian Youth Work." There are 36 other categories on recreation, most of which are used in every church recreation program—Hobbies, Program Planning, Play Production, and Techniques.

Copies of AGBOR are available upon request. Write the National Recreation Association, Department CH, 8 West Eighth Street, New York 11, New York. Please enclose 25¢ to cover handling and mailing.

• There need be no warfare between the School of Martha and the School of Mary. Mary was the meditative sort. I'll venture she could have written some good articles on those chats with Jesus. But things would have been top-heavy around Bethany if Martha had not been in the kitchen. The kitchen almost got Martha down, at least once, but if all Marthas left the kitchen for good we would all be down.

—Vance Havner, in
Rest for the Weary
(Fleming H. Revell Co.)

Church and U.S.D.A.

• In recognition of the importance of the rural church as a community institution in serving farm people, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has established a focal point for closer relationships with town and country church leaders, and with both denominational and interdenominational organizations.

This will provide a more direct link with USDA to help these leaders stay abreast of the changing scene of rural life. They will be kept current on the Department's programs, informational materials, and personnel.

Philip F. Aylesworth of the Federal Extension Service has been assigned on a Department-wide basis to work closely with USDA agencies in serving church leaders.

Mr. Aylesworth served eight years in the immediate office of the Secretary of Agriculture, and for the last two of these years was Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Federal-States Relations. Prior to that he was Secretary of USDA's Policy and Program Committee. His background also includes service with the Farm Security Administration (now the Farmers Home Administration), the War Food Administration, and the Production and Marketing Administration.

A native of Valparaiso, Ind., he grew up on a farm in Porter County, Ind. Mr. Aylesworth holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from Purdue University and did additional graduate work at the University of Wisconsin. He is a former staff member of the Agricultural Economics Department at Michigan State University.

American Bible Society

• During 1956 the American Bible Society distributed at home and abroad 1,007,560 Bibles, 1,681,115 New Testaments and 12,481,383 Gospels and other Portions, a total of 15,170,058 Scriptures, this circulation being in 193 languages and more than 60 countries. It also sent out to the blind 64,832 embossed volumes and Talking Book records, again surpassing any previous year.

Town & Country Church

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Contributors of articles to TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH speak for themselves and not for the National Council of Churches or sponsoring organizations.

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Not Bigger, But Better

E. W. MUELLER

• It had been an inspiring and informative church conference. Pastor Brown, two years in the ministry, had been impressed by the men who presented the mission challenge which confronts the Lutheran Church in the rapidly growing areas.

There had been an informative lecture on population trends, and there had been fine reports of the success which various congregations were experiencing in membership growth. The entire conference had conveyed a spirit of growth, expansion, and forward movement. Yet this meeting, like similar meetings, gave him a feeling of insecurity that he could not shake or explain.

Reflection

When the conference broke up, there were the usual goodbyes. Pastor Brown started home for his rural parish in the northern part of the state. As he came to the outskirts of the conference city, he drove through a section where hundreds of houses were in the process of being built. This, indeed, was what one of the speakers had in mind when he had talked about the rurban development. The thought flashed through his mind, "It must be a real challenge to be given the assignment to organize a new congregation in a new area. It must be wonderful to be surrounded with so many potential church members. Everything would be new—no tradition, no organizational pattern of parish lines, no one to say, 'We have always done it this way.' Indeed, there would be many difficulties, but they would be different."

As the landscape changed from houses to cornfields, his thoughts went to his own parish. It was centered in a quaint little village in the northern part of the state. One new house had been built in the last ten years. In the meantime a few houses had been torn down or moved away. One or two business places had yellowed signs in the window which read: "Closed."

He was leaving an area of expansion, growth, and development. He was returning to an area where expansion had come to a standstill. As he thought on these things, the feeling of encouragement gave way to the feeling of insecurity. He felt let down. Suddenly, he saw the full importance of the maps that one of the speakers had presented. He realized that his parish was located in the section of the state for which the map had indicated a population loss. He now knew the reason for his feeling of insecurity.

Resentment

What would he be able to do with the challenges that had been presented at the conference? If his evangelism efforts were measured according to net membership increase his congregation had experienced during the year, it might stand at zero even though he had baptized fifteen adults. Last spring three-fourths of his young people in the high school graduating class had left his parish. A number of families had moved away. A father had taken a job in a factory sixty miles to the south.

At the conference, one of his former classmates, located in a suburban area, had told him how his congregation was flourishing. He had found joy in his classmate's success, but now depression welled up in his heart. He said to himself, "Why was I not called to a growing area? Why did I have to be sent to a small town where there is no growth, where there are two other Lutheran synods represented?"

As he thought on these things, his feeling of depression was mingled with a feeling of resentment toward the Lutheran pioneers. He felt they must have lacked vision and understanding to permit or to encourage the organization of three Lutheran congregations in a small town.

(*Continued on Page* 6)

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Determination

Pastor Brown's gas tank gauge showed empty. It was necessary for him to stop for gas, and this brought his reflections to a close. The joy of being reunited with his family and the friendly handshake of his parishioners on the morrow overcame his feeling of depression and resentment for the present. God had called him to this area and he was determined to serve his parish faithfully.

Nevertheless, Pastor Brown's situation, and his is not an isolated case, needs the constructive and realistic attention of the church. For some, population decline is an academic question; but for Pastor Brown and other pastors in his situation, it is not an academic question. It creates frustrations, mixed loyalties, and personal problems. If the feeling of insecurity is not met, it may continue to gnaw away at the personality of pastors and laymen, and give us people with a negative outlook.

Interpretation

The answer is not to desert churches that are located in these declining areas. The answer lies in the direction of interpretation and evaluation. It calls for an adjustment in church programming. In this case the church must adjust downward, and this is most difficult to do.

Ever since our country was founded, the words "expansion" and "growth" have been written large in our planning. You can hardly pick up a newspaper or a magazine which in some way does not refer to population growth, overcrowding, the need for more houses or bigger buildings.

It would be unthinkable and unforgivable for a progressive church not to make an effort to spell out the implications to this population growth. It is equally unforgivable for a progressive church not to come to grips with the adjustment that it must make in the declining population areas. Many of its congregations are functioning in such areas.

An Effective Ministry

Our concern is not to keep every town and country church open. If people living in a certain rural area can best be served by having two congregations, let us by all means have two; but if it can be done better by having one, let us have one.

Whatever adjustment is needed, let us be bold enough to make it. An adjustment downward is as good as an adjustment upward if it gives us a setup that will make it possible for the church to serve the community better.

Our pioneers who left European shores with their cathedral-like churches and in their new homes had to be content with sod or log churches had their adjustment to make. They could not foresee that the next one hundred years would bring more change than the one hundred years before them had brought. It is not for us to critize their churchmanship. But rather for us to be quick to emulate them by adjusting our lives and program to our situation as they adjusted their lives and program to the ways of the frontier.

We have had all too much emphasis on bigness. We are neither interested in big congregations nor in small congregations. We are interested in effective congregations. For the rural areas where the population peak was reached twenty years ago, the emphasis must be NOT BIGGER, BUT BETTER.

Leadership

This phrase gives to many a rural pastor and rural congregation a major assignment—an assignment that calls for real churchmanship. It takes a high quality of leadership to motivate congregations to adjust to expansion. Although different in character, it also takes a high quality leadership to motivate the congregations to adjust to a declining population. This leadership the church has not nurtured.

God in His Wisdom gave to congregations in declining areas leaders, pastors, and laymen who could do the job that needed to be done. They had the understanding and the personality for it. But since the church did not emphasize sufficiently the importance of the job or else did not convey to those involved that the task at hand calls for leadership of the highest quality, leaders who could have helped congregations make the adjustment were overcome by frustrations or fled from the area.

A Great Congregation

Great congregations are the product of wise and dedicated leader-

U.S.D.A.
Photo by Joseph Ackerman

ship. As the church wrestles in the declining population areas with the assignment of NOT BIGGER, BUT BETTER, it must keep in mind:

1) The importance of a Call is not determined by the size of the congregation or the geographical location, but by the Author of the Call.
2) Adjustment downward is as important as adjustment upward when the situation demands it.
3) Our interest is not in a big or in a small congregation, but our interest is in an effective congregation.
4) For many rural areas the need is NOT BIGGER, BUT BETTER. This calls for certain types of leadership.
5) No problem is ever solved by running away from it.

Emeline Is Good Neighbor

• When lightning struck twice in the same place last summer, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Lubben found that the members of the Emeline Church were good neighbors.

Members of this little rural church, which belongs to the Eastern Iowa Cooperative Parish, first helped the Lubbens save their house. Later, when lightning struck the barn and burned it to the ground, the people helped to clear away the charred debris and gave a hand in building a new barn.

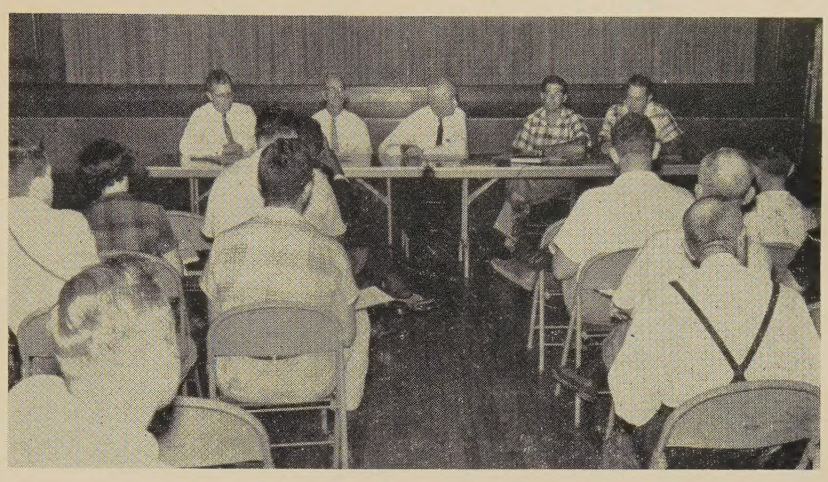
A large portable sawmill was brought in, which cut the siding and dimension lumber from the native oak and cherry which grew on the farm. In almost no time the building was finished.

Then the congregation held its Sunday morning service in the new structure, with bales of new alfalfa hay for pews and a kitchen table for the pulpit of the Rev. James Hodgson, the stated supply. Lacking a musical instrument the congregation sang hymns and songs unaccompanied.

The pastor's text was suitably chosen from Psalm 127, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

—Reprinted from
Iowa Presbyterian News

Tennessee Summer School



• Some seventy ministers of eight different denominations concluded the second annual University of Tennessee Summer School for Town and Country Ministers at Knoxville, June 24-28, with a feeling of greater understanding of rural and small-town church problems and opportunities.

The school is sponsored jointly by the U-T School of Religion and College of Agriculture to give ministers of town and country churches opportunity to learn the situations, trends, influences and programs which are factors in the service the church renders to the rural community.

Denominations at this second school included Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian U. S., Cumberland Presbyterian, Disciples of Christ, Church of God, Episcopal, and Seventh Day Adventist. Those attending were an outstanding group of ministers who participated enthusiastically in discussions and were eager for facts and information about factors influencing their church work. Their attendance was sponsored by denominational groups, organized communities, business groups, local Farm Bureaus, and other organizations. Outstanding lay and church speakers highlighted the week's program.

The final evaluation of the School by the ministers attending indicated that it gave them opportunity to take a realistic look at today's world, its economy, government, and social aspects; and then helped them use this knowledge to evaluate their church and its program in terms of its needs and opportunities.

—Rosslyn B. Wilson

Malabar Farm

• Friends of the Land, a voluntary organization of persons interested in soil conservation and related issues, has succeeded in raising $140,000 in order to purchase Malabar Farm, home of the late Louis Bromfield, novelist and farmer, in Ohio. The Friends plan to continue to operate the farm as a private, educational and experimental center, with a library based on the collection that Mr. Bromfield assembled. Mr. Bromfield writes in several of his books about the rehabilitation of his farms. The farm was visited on various occasions by church groups and many others interested in his ventures.

Expanding Rural Library Services

• During 1957 thirty-eight states and Hawaii presented to the U.S. Office of Education plans for improving library services to rural residents under the recent Library Services Act, which provides grants in aid to cooperating states. The Office has approved thirty-six plans.

Notes on Recollections
III. Finding a Vocation

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• My interest in my grandfather's farm, on which I worked in summers, was a real one. Rather early in my high school days I discovered on the porch of the minister of the Coopersburg Moravian Church, then Edmund de S. Brunner, a copy of the periodical, *Rural Manhood.* My conversations with Dr. Brunner opened up new worlds to me. Through him I learned about Theodore Roosevelt's Commission on Country Life which reported in 1909; about the writings of Kenyon L. Butterfield and Liberty Hyde Bailey; about the pioneering work of Warren H. Wilson for the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. I felt I was not qualified to go into the ministry, but my wish was to get into a vocation both religious and rural.

Through my college days I read widely in the social sciences on my own initiative. I attended conferences in the Lehigh Valley on matters of social interest. I studied eagerly most of the diversified curriculum of Moravian College. I believed that the country work of the Y.M.C.A. would appeal to me, but I was mistaken. I wanted to see how I would take to teaching, but after a short trial found I really did not like the classroom.

I received an opportunity to work on the rural survey of the Interchurch World Movement in New York, rather liked it, but had to leave when that ill-fated venture collapsed in 1919. I worked for a brief time on rural surveys of the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, later the Institute of Social and Religious Research. For two years I was managing editor of the *Christian Work,* a thirty-two-page undenominational weekly in New York. Then in October, 1923, I was made a research associate in the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. I began to write for the weekly *Information Service,* for which I have, at this writing, prepared material for about thirty-four years. I first wrote on issues related to agriculture and rural life, and made a few special or thorough studies that were published as pamphlets, e.g. *Social Aspects of Farmers Cooperative Marketing* (University of Chicago Press, 1925) and *Social Aspects of Agricultural Credit* (Federal Council of Churches, 1926).

Before joining the Federal Council staff I had begun to work on *Rural America,* the periodical of the American Country Life Association, and I continued to edit it until publication was discontinued in 1941. This was a part-time assignment on which I could work whenever opportunity offered. In 1929, I began to serve also as executive secretary of the American Country Life Association, continuing until 1941. The Association continues as a conference body bringing together interested people for discussion of current issues. It served as a clearing house of information on rural affairs.

This brought me into contact with such persons as E. C. Lindeman, Bailey, Butterfield, Henry Israel, Edmund de S. Brunner, Nat T. Frame, C. J. Galpin, C. C. Taylor, Dwight Sanderson, and many others. All these contributed mightily to my education and my professional and personal capacities. I organized the annual meetings of the Association from 1929-40, inclusive. These had attendances varying from 640 to 2,900 persons. We usually met at the agricultural colleges, and under their cooperation. This experience broadened my contacts, particularly with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As I got into my Federal Council job, it was discovered that I could write on other than rural subjects. I also maintained contact with the Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and usually attended the annual meetings of the H.M.C. from 1919 on. This gave me the opportunity to know Paul L. Vogt, Hermann Morse, Ralph Felton, Malcolm Dana, Edwin L. Earp, Mark A. Dawber, William R. King, and others previously mentioned.

The later generation included M. R. Zigler; Thomas Alfred Tripp, who succeeded Dana; Henry S. Randolph, who succeeded Wilson; and Mark Rich, who came from a pastorate in upstate New York to head up the American Baptist rural work.

From these persons I learned year by year more than I can ever record. There was a binding fellowship among the national country church workers. We did not always agree on precise method or goal, but we respected one another, worked side by side, and, I think, often forgave and upheld one another. There is a country church movement, an affair of the spirit, with no budget or headquarters, and I am glad to have been a part of it.

Beginning about 1930, the Committee on Town and Country became a joint agency of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches, and I became its secretary. This was at first a slight or incidental assignment, but from 1943 to 1950 I served it half time for most years.

I determined to know a good deal about the literature of rural life, broadly speaking. I reviewed books and pamphlets for *Information Service* and *Rural America.* I also compiled in 1925 a comprehensive *Guide to the Literature on Rural Life,* which was many times reprinted. Over 65,000 copies of it were sold up to 1939. The American Library Association staff once told me it was the most widely circulated bibliography on rural life that had ever come to their attention.

Soon I was generalist rather than specialist. I had an interest in adult education and wrote, with John D. Willard, a general survey of pro-

grams of adult education in process in rural America (1932). I thought Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal had re-aroused the interest of the people in government. I wrote two books on the New Deal (1933 and 1934). I wrote a study of rural social work in 1949. I wrote a full-length book, *A Cooperative Economy,* in 1943. I encouraged some of the early intergroup activities, and was early an advisor of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. I helped to organize the Institute of Human Relations, held every two years at Williamstown, Massachusetts, 1935-39.

I was sent to Washington 1945-50, where I reported on pending legislation for some 1,700 officials of the churches. During most of this period I worked half-time in Washington, half-time for Town and Country, only incidentally on church statistics and *Information Service.* I have edited the *Yearbook of American Churches* most years since 1940. Lately, I have given much attention to church statistics, which I have studied on an interdenominational basis for almost forty years.

Since 1953, I am thankful to say, I have been down to one job, with less spreading of energy than for two decades. I edit *Information Service* (with data on many current issues), the *Yearbook of American Churches,* yearly, try to keep up with many church statistics, and write what I like to write for the monthly *Town and Country Church,* which I edited 1943-52.

I did graduate study at Columbia University 1922-27, and have been a member of its weekly seminar on rural life since 1945. I conducted an Institute of Rural Economics at Rutgers University in 1935. I have taught short courses in a number of summer schools, mainly for rural ministers.

As I look over this somewhat checkered vocational record, I observe that the ecumenical movement is not a bed of roses for its employes. I believe, however, that along with too many changes in emphasis, and too many subjects to write about, I have had golden opportunities to use my pen and to make the kind of interpretation of issues which early in my life I longed to do. (In later sections I elaborate on some of the interests which are only mentioned here.)

"Unique Protestant Community"

• Twenty pastors and laymen of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches of France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and the United States are living together in the small French village of Taize some seventy miles from the Swiss border, in "an ordered community of Protestant brothers." Their life is described by William D. Boyd and David Alexander in *Presbyterian Life,* Philadelphia, January 19, 1957. "In their worship the brothers wear white robes." One of the members is a physician, who turns back all the fees received "to the brotherhood for joint use." Messrs. Boyd and Alexander are two "Presbyterian U.S.A. seminarians taking postgraduate studies abroad." Following is a large portion of the article in *Presbyterian Life:*

"The aim of the Community of Taize is to serve God in life, work, and worship. The experiment was started in 1939 by Roger Schutz, then a young theologian active in the Swiss Student Christian Movement. Now Prior of the Community, Schutz's concept of the brotherhood of celibacy, common ownership, and obedience has been slowly worked out in the Reformed tradition. He wished to avoid the idea of the monastery—the cloister separated from the world. From the beginning the Brothers of Taize have found their work in the world. The brotherhood's first regular services were held in 1943 in the church of John Calvin in Geneva.

"Although the brothers agree to remain single, they stress quite clearly that they do not regard this state superior to all. A book on this subject by Sub Prior Max Thurian outlines the reasons for celibacy. The brothers remain single not to become self-righteous, nor to be less or more than normal humans: They do it in order to devote their entire personalities to the Christian task.

"Their ideas on common ownership mean *community* in the best sense of the word. Whatever one brother uses, all may use; and all things are shared freely. Taize is self-sustaining, each brother doing his appointed job. The farms and buildings are beautifully kept, and their twelfth-century church has been repaired and renovated. They run a pottery, and they welcome visitors who wish to share Taize for retreats. And here again we were amazed at the lack of theologians. During our stay we met musicians, architecture students, a teacher of handicapped children, and a doctor, among others.

"The brothers accept obedience to the prior, but there is no specific authoritarianism involved. The rule of obedience is rather an acceptance of the responsibility of the prior to keep the flock together.

"Prayer, worship, inner silence, and action are all essential to the Taize way of life. Daily prayers form the framework around which the brothers' lives revolve. When they first rise, they gather in their ancient church clad in their white robes to symbolize the joy in the praise of God. At midday, the men of Taize come in their working clothes for periods of meditation. And once again in the white robes they sing and pray at dusk. They have drawn on many churches for their patterns of formal worship. A recording of one of their services won the Grand Prize for French religious work in 1955.

"Daring and imagination have gone into this unique Protestant community. The calm beauty and dignity of the brothers' services and the spiritual impact of their work in Burgundy, Marseilles, North Africa, and other parts of the Mediterranean world have merited the respect of many who were at first skeptical of the experiment at Taize."

Nuggets

"Philosophy, if rightly defined, is naught but the love of wisdom."—Cicero (102-43 B.C.)

"The discovery of what is true and the practice of that which is good are the two most important objects of philosophy."—Voltaire (1604-1778)

Seminar in Nova Scotia

Photo by Bernard MacKinnon

• About forty persons participated in the seminar in Nova Scotia, August 5-8, 1957, sponsored by the National Council's Department of Town and Country Church. These persons went to Nova Scotia in order to study the unique, comprehensive program of "adult education by means of economic cooperation" carried on for over twenty-five years by the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, of which the Rev. M. J. McKinnon is the present director. Andrew Braid, a Protestant layman, of the staff of the Nova Scotia Cooperative Union, conducted various sessions and outlined the itinerary in Nova Scotia. Benson Y. Landis of the National Council of Churches' Bureau of Research and Survey acted for the Department of Town and Country Church in arranging the contacts with the Nova Scotia leaders.

The seminar heard from Monsignor M. M. Coady, director emeritus of the Extension Department, who interpreted the St. FX philosophy of adult education—the release of the energies of the people for organized democratic economic action. The philosophy has been implemented by means of numerous credit unions, fishermen's federations, cooperative stores, housing associations, etc. A comprehensive program of agricultural education in the St. John River Valley of New Brunswick was described by John Chisholm of the Extension staff. Rod MacMullin of the Nova Scotia Credit Union League told about the credit union movement, and the way by which it had directly and indirectly aided other cooperatives.

Then the group, traveling by auto, spent the remaining time interviewing leaders of local community enterprises—fish plants, farmers' wholesale depots, credit unions, housing projects, stores.

At a final round-up, Monsignor Coady and others answered questions from the members of the seminar. Dr. Coady was kind enough to say that a high proportion of the questions were of the sixteen-cylinder type. Reference was also made to

Photo by Louis Meyer

Monsignor M. M. Coady, Benson Y. Landis, and Henry S. Randolph

evidence that the program of adult education and economic cooperation had developed good understanding among religious groups.

The Roman Catholic educators at Antigonish have had among their associates Protestant clergymen and laymen. The large consumer co-operative on Cape Breton—the British-Canadian—was formed over fifty years ago by Protestants, and Protestant ministers today are members.

In one village, a young fisherman, a Protestant, recently negotiated a credit union loan for the purpose of purchasing a new boat. He got the loan. It was endorsed by three Roman Catholic priests.

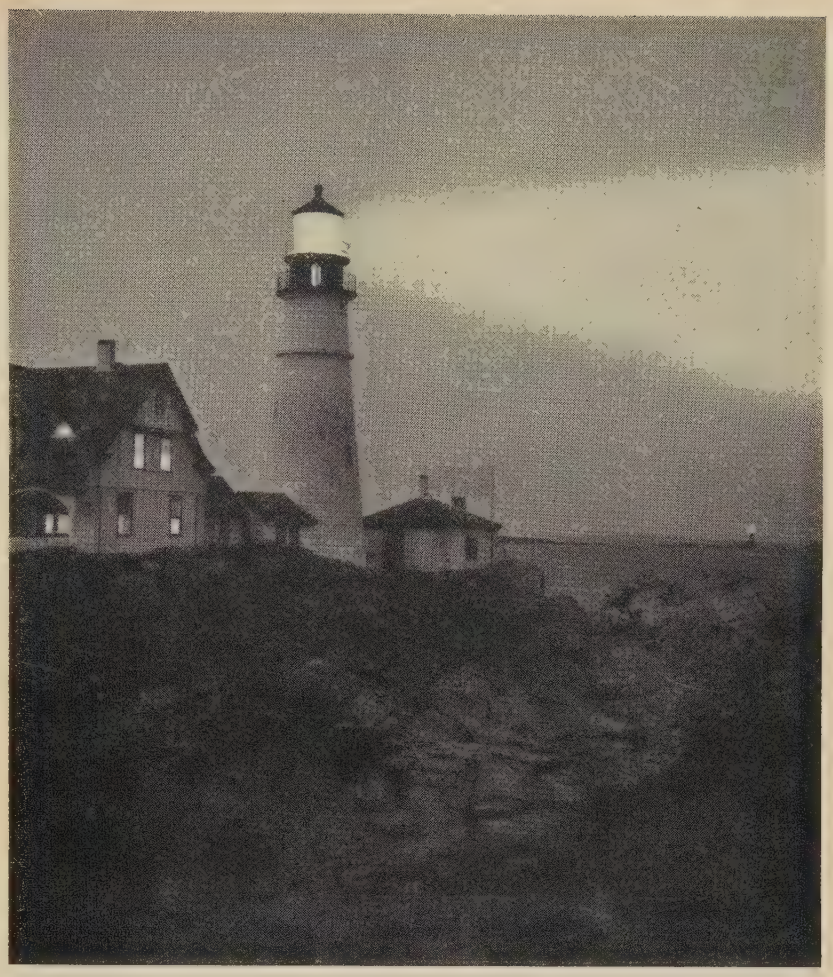
—B. Y. L.

Chancel

• Because of the current interest in "hi-fi," churches and groups are increasingly turning to recorded music to meet needs in their program. *Chancel,* a non-profit service organization designed to help and guide all who wish to use recorded music for worship, is working in this field. It is continually testing the records of the many commercial record companies in a church sanctuary to gather together the full library of recorded music that is religiously expressive and useful for worship services. It is preparing religious services and meditational music programs for church and group use. And it has developed the Sacred Recorded Music Guild as the instrument and association through which all who are interested in using sacred recorded music for worship can be guided and helped.

The Sacred Recorded Music Guild is an association open to all—churches, religious groups, schools, associations, hospitals, institutional homes, families and individuals. The several membership classifications depend upon the amount of participation and help each group or individual wishes.

For full information about *Chancel* and the service it renders, write to Mr. Hobart Mitchell, 500 East Lincoln Avenue, Mount Vernon, New York.



Winston Pote from A. Devaney, N. Y.

TEN YEARS OF SERVICE OBSERVED

• On August 20, 1957, seventy-two men and women from all over the United States and some from abroad sat down to break bread together at the Hotel Sherman in Chicago.

Though it was an official banquet, each had paid for his own dinner in the spirit of the organization whose tenth anniversary they observed—the Christian Rural Overseas Program, CROP.

For it was in August, 1947, that CROP was officially formed and began its mission of mercy to all the world through headquarters offices in Chicago.

A number of speakers representing the churches of America, farm organizations, and volunteer service groups paid tribute to the many farm families who showed their concern for other, less fortunate people by sharing freely with them the abundance of their fields.

In ten years the total value of gifts was announced as $15,271,787.05 given in every state of the union. This has provided food relief (and self-help materials such as seeds, livestock, agricultural tools, fertilizer, etc.) weighing 239,696,789 pounds valued at $32,767,050.69.

Toastmaster at the banquet was Mr. Everett Mitchell, noted farm director of the National Broadcasting Company, and main speaker was the Rev. John D. Metzler, founder of CROP and for the past three years secretary for material aid in Europe of the World Council of Churches. Representatives of Germany, Japan, and the Arab States read messages of good will from their governments for voluntary relief work among their people.

Springs in the Prairie

EMERSON W. HARRIS

• Ambition is not a sin, even in the ministry, and ministers who do not aspire to self-improvement or self-betterment can hardly fulfil the requirements of any parish however large or small. No doubt a great many seminary students and ministers, their imaginations fired by the slogans "high-potential churches" and "parishes of promise," assessed their own personalities and concluded they had the needed qualities and responded to the challenge. I do not suggest, crassly, that ministers or students responded solely to the chance for financial betterment but to the challenge for adventure and the prospect of doing something worthwhile with their lives.

However, a cursory glance at statistics reveals that, while many may aspire, few will be chosen. The Board of Home Missions material for the 1956 Stewardship Canvass lists 9 parishes of promise, 21 special rural projects, and 6 special city projects—not a large number. I have no data on the number of "high-potential" churches, but they cannot be many, probably not more than 30. The Congregational Christian *Year Book* (1955) reveals that 41 per cent of our churches have 99 members or less; 63 per cent of our churches list 249 members or less. Of course, many smaller churches are yoked—a hasty adding of yearbook figures total about 650 yoked churches or larger parishes.

Clearly, most seminary graduates and ordained ministers will never know the great adventure of "high-potential churches" or "parishes of promise" but will spend their active ministry in ordinary churches. If slogans are needed, we might label these the "migrant churches," being those which younger aspirants hope to pass through on their way to the greener pastures and which elder ministers fear they will pass through on the way down and out to retirement. We might paraphrase the old adage, "God must love the smaller churches, He made so many of them." One of the most crucial experiences of the minister's life occurs when he realizes that the green pastures are not for him—that his lot is cast permanently among the seeming prairies and deserts of parish work.

In this crucial experience some ministers lose morale and purpose; others come through victoriously with deeper faith and purpose. May I here relate my observation of a friend's experience? Jim and his wife began their ministry in a small town and dreamed of advancement. But advancement never came; he went from one average parish to another, none offering the chance for genuine creative work or for spectacular work that would bring recognition. Both he and his wife felt he deserved better and hoped—and hope died hard. In the struggle to maintain hope, unhappiness and bitterness marked them both. The vision faded, and Jim's face registered defeat, frustration, hopelessness. In our casual meetings at conferences he seldom looked at the stars but down to earth, and his smile, when he smiled, was forced. And his wife, too, bore the signs of strain, of self-doubt and resentment.

But one day I met her at a conference. "You've found it," I greeted her.

"What do you mean, I've found it?"

"Why, just this," I replied. "For years I've watched you and Jim. I've been very concerned about you, because I've seen the tenseness and the frustration. But you're different now. You're happy, and the tenseness is gone. You're lovelier than you've ever been, and your face shows the inner peace that passes knowledge."

My observation was correct. Her personality had changed; she stood erect, forward-looking, purposive, happy.

"I didn't know you knew," she responded. "How did you know?"

"Don't you suppose that most ministers face what you have faced? Isn't it an experience that almost all of us have to go through?"

"I suppose it is," she replied. "The trouble is that, when you are in it, you feel you are all alone. Yes, we've found it, and I know what you mean."

And what she meant was, and what everyone learns, that the Kingdom is within and the rewards are within; and not until the minister and his wife find the Kingdom within will they find it in the job.

A few minutes later Jim came, and, as we met, I observed the same change in him. The hang-dog look of previous years and the agony of self-doubt were gone. Now he had confidence, sureness, and he looked up and saw the stars. Yet his parish was the same as previous parishes, but Jim and his wife were different persons. Thinking of them, I have often recalled Sandburg's lines on the young man who heard a Mischa Elman concert:

"A man saw the whole world as a grinning skull and cross-bones. The rose flesh of life shriveled from all faces. Everything is a fake. Dust to dust and ashes to ashes and then an old darkness and a useless silence. So he saw it all. Then he went to a Mischa Elman concert. . . . When he got outside his heels hit the sidewalk a new way. He was the same man in the same world as before. Only there was a singing fire and a climb of roses everlastingly over the world he looked on."

Jim and his wife would be the victims of an illusion or even a delusion were it not for the fact that the barren pastures do offer adventure and challenge sufficient to test the mettle of any person. So I have titled this article "Springs in the Prairie" with obvious reference to Isaiah and other prophets and psalm writers and to the change that may come to the desert so that it remains no longer a place bare and infertile but a place lush and lovely. Because in the prairie church, or city or town church of four hundred members or less, there is challenge, adventure, opportunity.

A Glance at the Obstacles

A casual look reveals the obstacles; we must look deeper to find the challenge. Perhaps we should consider the obstacles before we consider the adventure. One obstacle in the average church is the building itself. Most buildings are not designed for modern usage. While New England-style churches have a grace of line, the more numerous Akron-style churches stand as monuments to the theology and utilitarianism of their day—neither suits today's needs when worship and education are increasingly important. But the aesthetic young minister should realize that, however monstrous the building appears to him, it is a thing of beauty to many in the congregation who remember that here they were baptized, or married, or brought their loved dead for burial. Yet the old building is an obstacle and increasingly so, as the cost of new building becomes prohibitive and as even town and village share in the national population growth.

A second obstacle is administration—leadership, organization, goal. Often a clique runs the church, voiding the usual constitutional requirement of a year's lapse in holding office: "After all, there is no one else to do it." Often the church is enslaved by habit: "We've never done it that way." Occasionally, the minister weakens the church by being clerk, secretary, treasurer. Even when laymen manage the business affairs, they often do it lackadaisically, far less efficiently than they run their own businesses. Many average churches are poorly organized. Boards andcommittees meet sporadically, and the members have little understanding of their duties. The various affiliated groups go their own way; there is no central planning. Then, too, seldom is there any evaluation of the work done, and the church as well as the groups in the church have no goals worthy of the name. On association, state, and national levels laymen's activity is being stimulated, but the corrective influence has not yet percolated down to many of the average or smaller churches.

A third obstacle is the prospect of small numerical growth. A rapidly growing community offers the chance of rapid church-membership growth. But many small cities and towns are growing very slowly, and some are losing population to industrial centers. Membership crops in these will not yield thirty-sixty, or a hundred fold. Often the minister may consider himself fortunate if membership statistics remain the same for several years.

But the Obstacles are the Challenge

The plain fact, however, when we look deeper, is that the apparent barrenness of opportunity is itself the challenge. The seeming lack of potential makes the minister's "calling" essential and the average church offers opportunities for adventure to satisfy the restless or ambitious spirit, challenges that demand the utmost in faith, tact, and perseverance, and rewards enough to bring abiding compensations and genuine accomplishments.

First, the average church offers the minister rare opportunities for personal growth while it demands of him a very considerable versatility. Like the general practitioner in medicine who needs a fair knowledge of all areas of medicine, the minister of the average church must have a fair grasp of all areas of the pastoral relationship. Also, while successive pastorates pose similiar problems, they may offer different opportunities. For example, one church may be ripe for an extensive youth program, another may be ready for a fine educational program for children and adults, another may require extensive organizational development, another may demand sermons of rare quality. Thus, by successive parishes, the minister achieves a fulness of personality and of skills in the ministry that make him, increasingly, a more adequate minister. For, as he is a learner, the skills gained in one parish become assets in the next. Few ministers at the time of seminary graduation are skilled preachers, administrators, counselors, organizers, educators, pastors to young and old, healthy and sick. These skills are learned, if at all, on the job, and, while the learning minister may be "stuck" all his life in the average church, he yet will perform a ministry that is worthy and fruitful and for which many will call him "blessed."

Second, the average church is poorly organized. It is rare to find trustees or deacons who understand their responsibilities and the limits of their powers. Boards of religious education are honorary positions, for the most part, because the members do not know their duties and have no work to do. Auxiliary organizations—youth, young adults, couples' clubs, men's and women's groups—make their own plans without consideration of the parent organization. Seldom is there any evaluation of the total program to assess strengths and weaknesses. No doubt it is possible to overorganize a church so that organization becomes a source of stumbling, but the average church suffers far more from lack of organization.

Most churches drift along from year to year without plan or goal. Two main objects of organization suggest themselves: that the administration of church affairs may proceed effectively and efficiently and that the church may plan, form goals, and strive to achieve its goals. We may only guess at what might happen if more churches were properly organized, if laymen knew their duties and were inspired to perform them, and if the various officers became a cabinet or council to evaluate and plan.

Obviously, the primary responsibility for training lay leadership and for adequate church organization falls on the minister. We may judge that many of us fall short, else the average church would be in a different condition. Recently the newspaper of a midwestern community began publishing biographical sketches of ministers in the community. One significant feature of these sketches was the recurrent complaint by ministers of various denominations of how they were irritated by, or reluctant to assume, the administrative duties of the church. One after another stated his feeling that the administration of the church interfered with his ministry. None

(*Continued on Page* 14)

(*Continued from Page* 13)

saw administration as a challenge or as an opportunity, which it is, for widening his ministry and for strengthening the church. Are ministers lazy? Or should seminaries do a better job in this respect? Surely, church administration, which is the training of laymen to function effectively and which is encouraging oversight over their performance, is essential if churches are to grow and if lay people are to assume their full part in the life and work of the church. And who but the minister can, or should, provide the training?

Third, the average church offers a great adventure in developing an adequate educational program. The physical plant is often a nearly insoluble handicap, but any man's ingenuity will be tested in striving to circumvent the handicap. There is a church school; perhaps, also, there is weekday education. Pilgrim Fellowship offers educational opportunities, as will other affiliated groups. Yet children pass through the educational process and arrive at Confirmation lacking a basic grasp of the origins of their faith, of the polity of their denomination, and poorly grounded in personal religious experience. Most adult members of a church are quite ignorant of the Bible or church history and unacquainted with the ethical principles which apply to problems of daily living. Few average churches have any standards for selection of, or any preparation of, teachers. It is no wonder that, as children pass from untrained to unskilled teacher, they gain so little knowledge and understanding. Clearly, there is a great job to do here in church after church to develop a program of religious education both that is religious and that is educational.

I suspect seminaries are at fault here, unless they have changed since my day. The religious-education courses I took in seminary did not acquaint me with the fine work of the then International Council of Religious Education in its leadership-training work, now the Leadership Training Division of the National Council of Churches. I wonder, too, whether seminary graduates are made familiar with the excellent work of the Faribault Summer School. Too few churches now have a concern over the quality of education they carry on. The improvement of education in standards and in the selection and training of teachers poses a great challenge and offers the prospect of fine achievement.

Fourth, the average church needs to grow in churchmanship and stewardship. In many churches not more than 25 per cent of the members do nearly all the work and provide the leadership; the rest ride along. The church would do better if more were active. We should not offer the challenge, though, unless we have things in mind. I read of a minister who dared the men of the church to respond." "I need a hundred men," he said. Within a week the response came, and the minister had to confess he had nothing in prospect. A comprehensive program of churchmanship involving membership recruiting, visitation, and education would enlist many who now are passive and tomorrow may be on the fringe.

A cursory glance at *Year Book* figures suggests that many churches simply do not develop their financial power through adequate stewardship education. While generalizations are invidious, I suggest that a church of two hundred members does not utilize its money potential if its budget falls short of $7,000; a church of three hundred members, with less than $10,000; and a church of four hundred members, with less than $15,000. Yet the *Year Book* indicates many do with less. Clearly, here is a need for stewardship education. Both churchmanship and stewardship offer social and spiritual adventure.

Fifth, the average church offers certain special blessings and poses certain special problems to the minister. A couple told me how they had attended a large church on four successive Sundays. Each Sunday the minister greeted them at the door, asked their names, and suggested they sign the guest book. After the fourth Sunday they quit. "The minister should have known us by that time." Such a fiasco need not occur in the average church. The minister quickly comes to know his members, becomes familiar with them, and should recognize the stranger after the first meeting. In small city or town he meets his people on the street, chats with them over morning coffee. The pastoral relationship takes on an easy familiarity that cannot obtain in the larger city or in the village.

But certain special problems rise, too. The minister is called upon for counsel: this boy or girl, that husband or wife. Occasionally, he is called upon for extensive therapy. Psychiatrists or psychologists are remote, and, while the minister should be aware of his limitations, he is sometimes asked to do much. His training should prepare him for these special demands. Some parishioners need no more than a patient listener; others reguire lengthy counseling. Here, as illustration, are a few that have come to me in recent years—a few of the unusual ones: an unmarried woman pregnant by the Holy Spirit and soon to give birth to the Messiah—menopausal neurosis; an elderly schoolteacher who felt that her life was a failure and that God would punish her and who attempted suicide, but "the water was too cold"; a young businessman who was caught in extramarital relations with his wife's juvenile sister; a young man reluctantly married to a girl because she had become pregnant who went off to war to solve his problem by getting killed but who came back, asking what he should do; a young woman with an obsessional neurosis whose parents could not afford psychiatric care. These suggest somewhat the variety that may come to the minister whose parish is remote from the city and may suggest the training the minister in the average church may need.

There came the day when the young woman with obsessional neurosis came to the study for counseling, exclaiming as she entered the door, "You know, for the first time in my life I know who I am! I've found myself, and, now that I know who I am, I am beginning to like myself." Self-identity is one of the

first steps toward emotional maturity; we can hardly love God or our neighbor until we know and love ourselves. There are, of course, many normal people in any congregation, some of whom need spiritual counseling. While they are able to live effectively and participate creatively in the life of the church and community, their spiritual life has been thwarted or has come to a full stop. As illustrative of this spiritual counseling I quote a few sentences from a letter: "Through you I have come to know the Rock on which I stand. I began to believe in God [she had believed in God in an abstract though not personal way] because I could not doubt that He lives in you. You taught me to pray, and my prayer has been answered." Surely one great reward for the minister is the change that comes in the lives of people through his counseling skill and care. Here is both opportunity and tremendous challenge.

Finally, and far from least important, is the opportunity to ask, or to induce laymen to ask, certain basic questions: What role should members of a church fill? What may we properly expect of members of a church? What is the role of a church in the community? What is religious education for? What is the Christian life? It is surprising how many lay people simply assume the church and so give the matter no hard thought. It may be embarrassing to ask, "How many ministers also assume the church?" The point is that, when minister and laymen together ask seminal questions, the church begins to come alive. What were obstacles become challenges, and springs turn the bare prairies into fertile lands.

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Prayer

• O God, as the apple ripening unites the resources of earth and sky into mellow fruitfulness, so, O God, with our advancing years mature in us worthy qualities seasoned and mellowed for usefulness. Amen.

—Mark Rich

The Good Neighbor Policy*

HAZEL B. CORLISS

• For several weeks scenes depicting the haying season have been seen by motorists passing along country roads. With the use of today's modern equipment, the big farmers are completing this task with such incredible efficiency and speed that it seems almost a miracle.

But to a middle-aged couple, trying to maintain a small farm, part-time, haying is a formidable undertaking. Ever since our nearest neighbor had to give up farming four years ago, thus ending our exchange work plan, we have found it necessary to do all the work ourselves. My husband would cut the hay with our small garden tractor. Not being designed for heavy field operations, it didn't do a very good job, and was a "man-killer" besides. I had to rake most of the hay by hand, while he was away at work. In the evenings, we used a trailer attached to our jeep to carry it to the barn. It was a long tedious job.

Last summer found us no longer physically able to do so much hard work alone. My husband had his first week of paid vacation since we came here eleven years ago. He had hoped to get our haying done, and take a little trip besides. But even though he had made early arrangements for someone to come help us, the big farmer considered his hay more important. Finally, a smaller farmer who is struggling to survive and a young man with six children to support came to our rescue. Although they were reimbursed, their neighborly spirit was something that money could not buy. They believed in the Golden Rule.

If we had asked any of the big farmers to help us, they would likely have told us that we had "gone haywire" with the heat! In their mad rush to expand, they feel they haven't time; yet so often we are forced to take our own precious time to chase their wandering cows out

of our garden and off our property. They put too many cows in the pasture above us, and don't bother to fix the fences. They have no time to plant the seeds of Good Will.

The city man feels sure that if he just had a little place in the country where he could have a garden, cow, beef calf, pig and a few chickens, all his worries would be over. Unless he has a cow, there will be no skim milk for the calf or pig. He cannot have a cow unless he can do his own haying.

Hay is cut grass dried in the sun. Grass doesn't just grow. It has to be well fertilized every Spring. And every few years, the ground has to be plowed and re-seeded. Hay must be put into the barn as soon as possible, or many nutrients will be lost. But if it is not thoroughly dry, spontaneous combustion may result, setting fire to the barn. Unexpected thunder storms cause a great deal of extra work.

God sends the rain upon the hay of both the large and small farmer indiscriminately. If he hastens to "make hay while the sun shines," regardless of his neighbor's needs, the big farmer may think that he will always be "sitting in clover." But lightning strikes swiftly. His modern machines will give neither comfort nor aid in illness and old age.

Just as the "hayseed" is deeply rooted in the soil, so were the Pil-

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* Written in August, 1957.

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grim pioneers who were small farmers. They were the "salt of the earth" kind of people who made America great. I certainly do not advocate a return to the horse and wagon days. But I do deplore our eventual spiritual demoralization if we continue to allow the smug selfishness to dominate our lives. Only with our own two hands can we rake up the "scatterings" of our moral values, which the machine-age has left behind.

In the days of my childhood on a twenty-cow farm in northern Vermont, neighbors helped each other during haying, sharing their very limited equipment. Their thirst was quenched by a big earthen jug of water, ginger, and maple syrup, chilled with crushed ice. The latter had been gathered in huge cakes and packed in sawdust during the winter. On a hot summer day, the fragrance of the new hay was mingled with the baking of berry or green-apple pie in the wood-burning kitchen stove. Frying salt pork, and beets or peas fresh from the garden, gave added aroma. The two eldest daughters had to drive the cows home from pasture. Walking barefoot along the main road, passing village children hooted "Hayseed!" at us. But when, in later years, we left the little red schoolhouse and attended high school with them, their parents sought our companionship. They felt that our stern country training would be a good influence on their children. As the small farm becomes extinct, fewer and fewer children will have the discipline of daily farm chores, or know the joy of jumping in the haymow.

As a nation, how can we expect other countries to believe in the sincerity of our "Good Neighbor Policy" unless we set a better example at home? Have our hearts become hard and tight like our modern bales of hay? Perhaps we need the old-fashioned hay tender to stir up our souls and let the sunshine in to cure our self-centeredness. Let us take the "windrows" of our daily lives and build such a high haystack of helpfulness, integrity and good will that it will reach heavenward, and be preserved for generations to come.

BOOK REVIEW

Deep Furrows. By Ira W. Moomaw. Agricultural Missions, Inc., New York. 1957. $2.50.

Dr. Moomaw points out that this is not a book that any one individual could write. The information has been gathered from many different sources, but throughout the book one can see Dr. Moomaw's rich experience and profound insights into the nature of the opportunity that the Christian Church faces as it attempts to meet the needs of two-thirds of the world's population, who live in rural areas.

The book presents in a very practical and concrete way some of the current issues that face the village church in our world. The second and third chapters give an excellent analysis of the extension service approach to the needs of rural people. By drawing illustrations from various lands the nature, methods and results of extension work are described in a very helpful way. The problems involved are discussed quite frankly as well as the ways in which extension methods may be used successfully.

The chapter dealing with leadership is pertinent to conditions in the United States as well as those in other lands. A very useful description of leaders and their functions is given as well as a discussion of training resources and objectives.

The relationship of the family and young people to the work of the church is discussed largely through illustrations of what is currently being done in those two fields in certain countries. These illustrations are suggestive not only of a philosophy but also of methods of work that are successful.

Increasingly throughout the world the church is turning to the cooperative movement for help in solving the economic problems of rural people. There have been some tragic failures because of inadequate knowledge of methods of cooperation, but such failures could be avoided if the advice given here were used.

Some of the important and challenging things that are being done in the area of land reform are discussed, with illustrations being drawn from India, the Philippine Islands, and several Latin American countries. The problem of land ownership has interested the Church down through the years. It is basic to the economy of all countries and it is a major concern of all Christian people. Related to wise land use and a means of supplementing the meager income of village people is the creative use of village industries and handicrafts. New ways in which these are being used are described.

The final chapter, "Perspective for the Years Ahead," helps us to understand some of the new factors that we need to consider as we make plans for the future. In discussing some pillars of needed emphasis, Dr. Moomaw considers such topics as the training of village pastors, personnel for village service, voluntary leaders, research methods and results, and a council of rural workers. He also describes the peaceful revolution that is taking place in the rural areas of our world because of the various aid programs and the challenge this presents to the Christian Church.

The extensive quotations and well-chosen pictures are woven together in such a way as to make a readable, suggestive and challenging book. We are living in one world and we need to learn more about one another and share our creative work. Dr. Moomaw has made a significant and constructive contribution to the growing body of information describing the work of the village church around the world.

—Richard O. Comfort

Moving?

• Please send your change of address to Town and Country Church, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. It takes about six weeks to process these changes and we do not want you to miss a copy.